

# Counseling on Early Stunting Prevention Efforts with Riau University KKN Students in Munsalo Kopah Village

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## Article Information:

Received October 01, 2023

Revised October 31, 2023

Accepted October 31, 2023

## Keywords:

Nutrition; Stunting; Toddlers

## Abstract

Stunting is a condition of chronic malnutrition that can cause children to experience health problems such as susceptibility to disease and a decrease in productivity levels. Factors that can cause stunting include insufficient food sources, parenting, and economic conditions. This work program aims to increase public knowledge about stunting in children from an early age. As well as educating parents about foods that can prevent stunting in children. Socialization is carried out in the form of delivering material related to counseling on what stunting is, its characteristics, the impact of stunting, and prevention of stunting. The low knowledge of mothers about stunting in Munsaloh Village encouraged Riau University KKN students to invite the community to participate in counseling efforts to prevent stunting from an early age. Understanding about stunting counseling efforts is expected to help the community increase knowledge about fulfilling balanced nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding, and complementary foods (MPASI) as a form of prevention against stunting.

## A. Introduction

Stunting in toddlers is one of the nutritional problems in the world, especially in developing countries (Falmuarat et al., 2022). Stunting occurs due to chronic malnutrition which can cause children to experience health problems such as susceptibility to disease and a decrease in productivity levels. Stunting is also a condition of growth failure where the child's weight and height are not in accordance with the normal growth path. Conditions that result in child growth failure usually occur at the age of 4 months and continue until the age of 2 years and peak at the age of 12 months (Rahayu et al., 2018). According to the Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, in 2017 as many as 22.2% or around 150.8 million children under five in the world were stunted (Unicef et al., 2020). This figure decreased in 2019, as many as 144 million (21.3%) under-fives were stunted. More than half of the world's under-fives are from Asia and two-fifths are from Africa. These children will start their lives with disadvantages such as learning difficulties at school, low income as adults and face barriers to participating in their communities (Unicef et al., 2020).

In 2019, Joint Malnutrition Estimates data revealed that in low-income countries, there were 39.7 million under-fives who were stunted. In lower-middle-income countries, the highest number of stunted children was 93.2 million, while in upper-middle-income countries, it was 11 million. The lowest number of stunted children under five is in high-income countries with 1.9 million children under five (Unicef et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the percentage of children affected by stunting in 2023 is 17.8% (Kemenkes, 2022).

Although stunting is experienced by toddlers, it can be caused by several important factors since pregnancy, namely the lack of nutritional intake in the fetus, as well as limited health services including quality ANC (Ante Natal Care) services (Nuradhihani, 2022). Breastfeeding also has an important role in maintaining

### How to Cite

: Erda, G., Siregar, N., Ramadhani, F., Efendi, M., Mistika, L., Ferdinand, T. A., Jannah, M., Anisa, R., Putri, N., Mariza, & Al Baihaqi, H. (2023). Counseling on Early Stunting Prevention Efforts with Riau University KKN Students in Munsalo Kopah Village. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pengabdian Masyarakat Bidang Kesehatan*, 1(3), 110–113. <https://doi.org/10.58723/abdigermas.v1i3.91>

### ISSN

: 2986-2698

### Published By

: CV Media Inti Teknologi

health, survival and preventing stunting in infants, because babies who are exclusively breastfed have a better immune system than babies who are not exclusively breastfed (Sitepu et al., 2023). After the baby is 6 months old, the baby can be introduced to complementary foods (Sutarto et al., 2018). Another factor preventing stunting is adequate food sources (Safitri & Nindya, 2017). Some food sources that can improve nutrition in children are foods that contain protein, iron, carbohydrates, calcium, and also zinc can be found in meat, eggs, milk, vegetables, rice, corn, and so on.

Based on the description above, a socialization activity was carried out regarding counseling on early stunting prevention efforts with Riau University KKN students in Munsaloh Village. This activity was carried out with village cadres in order to prevent stunting rates in toddlers. This work program aims to increase public knowledge about stunting in children from an early age. As well as educating parents about foods that can prevent stunting in children.

## B. Research Methods

The work program carried out by KKN Riau University students was carried out on August 12, 2023, located in Munsalo Village, Kuantan Tengah District, Kuatan Singingi Regency. This socialization is aimed at the surrounding community, especially mothers. Activities carried out in the form of socialization of counseling on efforts to prevent stunting from an early age. This work program is carried out by providing education related to preventing stunting in children, distributing milk and vitamins as a form of stunting prevention efforts, and distributing posters containing how to prevent stunting.

The Riau University student work program is carried out by several divisions, as follows:

### 1. Presenter

The presenter has an important role in the implementation of counseling on early stunting prevention efforts in Munsalo Village. The function of the speaker in this activity is as a speaker who will explain stunting in early childhood, this role is carried out by MHD. Effendi, Lensi Mistika and Fitri Rahmadhani.

### 2. Ingestion

This role has the task of distributing consumption-related necessities. The food that will be distributed is soup containing vegetables that have nutrients that are beneficial for children. In addition to distributing food, the role and task of the consumption member is as a person who will explain the demonstration related to Complementary Feeding (MPASI). This role was performed by Miftahul Jannah, Rahmatul Annisa, Nelsa Putri, Mariza, Nurainun Siregar.

### 3. Documentation

Documentation has a role in capturing every activity that will be carried out starting from providing material related to counseling on stunting efforts and distributing consumption. This role was carried out by Tri Agus Ferdinand and Habib Al Baihaqi.

## C. Result and Discussion

Community service activities are carried out in the form of socialization regarding efforts to prevent stunting from an early age. Participants who followed were the people of Munsalo Kopah Village, especially aimed at mothers who had babies and toddlers and pregnant women. The implementation of the activity was carried out on Saturday, August 12, 2023 which started at 08.00 WIB until completion. The topic to be discussed in this stunting prevention activity is that students will first explain what stunting is to the community, how to prevent stunting in infants and toddlers and recommended foods for infants and toddlers who are stunted. The efforts made are expected to help the community in increasing their understanding of what stunting is and how to prevent it and the community also understands more about complementary foods. This work program was welcomed by the residents of Munsalo Village.

One of the prevention of stunting is breastfeeding. Breast milk can be given to babies starting from the first 1 hour after birth with early breastfeeding initiation (IMD) by direct skin contact (Rosita, 2021). Breast milk is given exclusively for 6 months. The effect of exclusive breastfeeding on stunting is very important, because breast milk can act as an anti-infection for babies. According to research by (Kahssay et al., 2020) toddlers who are not exclusively breastfed are 6.6 times more likely to be stunted. This can occur because breast milk given exclusively contains colostrum. Colostrum contains immune substances, especially Ig A to protect infants from infectious diseases of the digestive tract, especially diarrhea (Taqwin et al., 2022). Inadequate breastfeeding can also increase the risk of stunting because infants tend to be more susceptible to infection and diarrhea (Amelia et al., 2023).

Stunting is also caused by mothers' lack of knowledge about good food and balanced nutrition during pregnancy, the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, and complementary foods that can affect height and weight development in infants and toddlers. Late provision of complementary foods can cause infants to experience iron deficiency because they do not receive sufficient nutrients. Inhibited child growth due to lack of iron intake as a toddler if it lasts long will lead to stunting so it is necessary to pay attention to complementary feeding in toddlers (Hanum, 2019).

This problem encourages Riau University KKN students to take part in providing counseling on efforts to prevent stunting early on by introducing to the community that it is important to maintain children's diet, height and weight, and knowledge about nutrition in children. One of the local foods that are often found in Indonesia is tubers. The carbohydrate content, especially starch in tubers, is beneficial for the nutrition of pregnant women. Some examples of tubers that can be utilized as stunting prevention foods include sweet potatoes, cassava, potatoes, taro, and gemili (Nenu et al., 2022).



**Figure 1.** Providing food, milk, as well as vitamins

Figure 1 above is the implementation of socialization related to food education that can prevent stunting in children carried out by providing food in the form of potatoes and distributing milk and vitamins. Providing milk and vitamins is something that can help the community in monitoring growth and development in children. This is because giving vitamins to children can increase appetite which will affect the growth and development of children. This is in accordance with the opinion of Isnaini et al., (2022) which states that vitamin A can help growth and development and increase appetite in children and also plays a role in cell differentiation, as well as body immunity.

In this activity also distributed posters, can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Providing posters as an effort to prevent stunting

The posters that were distributed included ways to prevent stunting, namely the fulfillment of good nutrition for mothers and babies, exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, monitoring children's health at health facilities such as posyandu, and access to clean water and sanitation facilities.

#### D. Conclusion

The work program carried out by Riau University students in counseling related to efforts to prevent stunting from an early age is the distribution of material, distribution of posters containing the definition of stunting, characteristics of children affected by stunting, the impact of stunting, and prevention of stunting in infants and toddlers and pregnant women. The prevention of stunting that was socialized was

exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, monitoring children's health at health facilities such as posyandu, and access to clean water and sanitation facilities.

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### First publication right :

Abdigermas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Bidang Kesehatan

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